

# **The Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence**

## **Article**

**May 20, 2013**

Today, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced the winners of the 2013 Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence which recognizes the men and women of the Department's top five exemplary military installations. Their hard work raised the standard for installation excellence and skillfully and efficiently met the Department of Defense's (DoD) standard of excellence. Military installations protect our nation, support our troops at home and abroad, and improve the quality of life for Service members and their families. American military installations are the backbone of our military infrastructure. They are the platforms from which our military capabilities are generated, deployed and sustained to meet the nation's needs during periods of crisis, contingency, combat, and humanitarian relief operations.

The Commander in Chief's Award is a proud military tradition and the highest honor bestowed on a military installation. In 1985, President Ronald Reagan urged DoD to search for installations that are the "best of the best" at utilizing their resources to support its mission and provide innovative solutions to complex problems. The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Defense Logistics Agency each nominate the most deserving installations to receive recognition from the Secretary of Defense and the President of the United States. To win the Commander in Chief's Award for Installation Excellence, an installation must demonstrate exemplary support for DoD's mission and show marked improvement and innovative progress in various processes that are fundamental to an installation's successful operations. The criteria used to judge the nominations reflect key initiatives of the President and the Secretary of Defense.

The 2013 Commander in Chief's Award winners are:

**Army:** U.S. Army Garrison Fort Rucker, Ala.

**Navy:** Naval Support Activity Panama City, Panama City Beach, Fla.

**Marine Corps:** Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.

**Air Force:** Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Miss.

**DLA:** Defense Supply Center Columbus, Defense Logistics Agency Land and Maritime, Columbus, Ohio

These installations exceeded DoD's standards for mission support and excelled in award criteria such as enhancing the quality of life, building unit morale, focusing on health and safety, and involvement in their local communities. In addition, they skillfully maintained facilities and applied innovative practices to protect the environment and conserve energy.

**U.S. Army Garrison Fort Rucker**, Alabama, is a first-time recipient of the Commander in Chief's Award, supporting expeditionary operations during a time of persistent conflict. In pursuit of installation excellence, Fort Rucker improved the quality of life for its Service members and their families, while enhancing outreach



**EXCELLENT INSTALLATIONS BUILD  
MORALE** – Fort Rucker holds a rally for  
Soldiers deploying to Kuwait.

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services that support the families of fallen soldiers. The installation also strengthened its relations with surrounding neighborhoods by opening special events to off-base communities and working closely and successfully with area businesses. Collaboration with Alabama Power led to innovative solutions and diversification of Fort Rucker's electricity service and partnership with American Water helped the installation to develop closed-loop water systems. As a result of these partnership initiatives, Fort Rucker steadily and significantly reduced its energy and water consumption.

***Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms***, California was recognized for installation excellence for the fourth consecutive year. The combat center is the world's largest combined arms, live-fire-and-maneuver training facility. Considered the "crown jewel" of Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, the combat center also excelled at providing a great quality of life for Service members and their families by improving housing, facilities, and many other services. In addition, it provided critical medical, dental and counseling support; hosted special events and activities; and assisted the Center's troops with educational opportunities through its Lifelong Learning and Education Center.



**EXCELLENT INSTALLATIONS  
PROVIDE TRAINING** – Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms provides realistic combat training for troops preparing for deployment.

***Naval Support Activity Panama City*** is located on Florida's Emerald Coast. This installation excelled particularly in award criteria relating to health and safety. It achieved stage three of the Occupational Health and Safety Agency Voluntary Protection Program, reducing both mishaps and work-related injuries. To improve energy efficiency and protect the environment, the installation used renewable energy sources, upgraded equipment, and created a "living shoreline" to reduce erosion and re-establish a coastal habitat.



**EXCELLENT INSTALLATIONS PLAN  
FOR THE FUTURE** – Naval Support Activity Panama City installed solar roof panels to reduce dependence on fossil fuel.

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is home to ***Keesler Air Force Base***, and the first duty assignment for thousands of Airmen each year. Keesler excelled in many areas including innovative energy and environmental conservation projects. Keesler also enhanced the quality of life for service members and DoD employees on the base as well as those living and working in the surrounding community. The base also continually gave back to the community through partnerships and committed volunteers, and supported several humanitarian relief and hurricane recovery aid projects.



**EXCELLENT INSTALLATIONS  
TRAIN FOR HIGH TECH WARFARE** – Keesler Air Force Base is the Air Force's "Electronics Training Center of Excellence" and trains in electronics, avionics, computers, and other mission vocations.

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*Defense Supply Center Columbus, Defense Logistics Agency Land and Maritime, Columbus, Ohio*, is responsible for the supply of land and maritime weapon systems parts. Meeting the criteria for military installation excellence, DLA Land and Maritime distinguished itself through superlative employee support, characterized by its Employee Assistance, Family Advocacy, and Equal Employment Opportunity programs. It also offered a variety of coping, educational, and morale-building opportunities to assist in pre-deployment, deployment, and re-integration of military members.



**EXCELLENT INSTALLATIONS  
BOLSTER COMMUNITIES** – Columbus holds an annual Fun Fest/Multi-Cultural Day open to the local community that highlights diversity and excellence in mission